

# Doctor of LAWS, honoris causa

February 27, 2003

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TREASURER, it is, indeed, a great honour and privilege to present to you and to this Convocation Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General and Commander-In-Chief of Canada, and ask that you confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

The office of the Governor General is one of Canada's oldest uninterrupted institutions. Its roots may be traced back some four hundred years to Samuel de Champlain, the first Governor of New France. Originally charged with the responsibility of representing the British monarchy, the role of the Governor General has expanded in the last one hundred years to take on a uniquely Canadian perspective. Today, while continuing to represent the Sovereign in Canada, the Governor General is also responsible for promoting national identity and unity, as well as cultural richness and diversity. As the twenty-sixth Governor General of Canada, Adrienne Clarkson has assumed these responsibilities with energy and enthusiasm, most recently in honouring our troops serving in distant waters.

Born in Hong Kong, she came to Canada as a refugee with her family in 1942. She was educated in the public school system, where, in her own words, she "learned to be Canadian." These



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formative years developed within her an undying pride and devotion to her country and all that is Canadian. Following postgraduate studies at the Sorbonne in France, she embarked upon a brilliant, award-winning career as a Canadian broadcaster, journalist and author. Her promotion of Canadian art has made her a cultural icon and one of Canada's most recognized figures.

On September 8, 1999, Adrienne Clarkson became the first immigrant to be appointed to the office of Governor General of Canada. Her appointment symbolized not only the diversity and inclusiveness of Canadian society but demonstrated, as well, the cultural evolution of this country. She is a role model for all Canadians.

Today we gather to confer upon Her Excellency the greatest honour awarded by the Law Society of Upper Canada. In 1960, the Society granted its first LL.D. to John D. Falconbridge, a distinguished legal author. Since then this honour has been granted to only eighty-four other individuals. The list of recipients is diverse and includes both lawyers and non-lawyers. The unifying characteristic that is shared by all, however, is an unwavering dedication to their community, to law and to Canada. Her Excellency meets these criteria and so I ask you, Treasurer, to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.